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Beyond Partition

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Public Mourning and Visual Spectacle in Kashmir

The popular Kashmiri demand for *azaadi* (independence) presents one of the most pressing contemporary challenges to the idea of India. In recent years, this demand has been fueled by growing public awareness of the scale of indiscriminate torture and enforced disappearances of largely young Muslim men (an estimated eight thousand to ten thousand during the past two decades) by Indian security forces, on charges of anti-state militancy.[1] In this chapter, I want to consider how public understanding about these disappearances is being constructed through the efforts of Kashmiri activists, photographers, and artists. Today, the public mourning of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) stands at the center of a much larger field of cultural production that keeps the disappeared alive in public memory. The image of the APDP's grieving mothers and "half-widows" (as the wives of disappeared men in Kashmir have come to be called) has been widely mobilized across fiction, music, film, painting, photography, and graphic art dedicated to constructing awareness around the violence of enforced disappearances. Rita Manchanda has noted how the figures of the Grieving Mother and the Martyrs' Mother have become iconic in the Kashmiri nationalist imagination, the grief of mothers providing a powerful aesthetic resource to the nationalist conception of azaadi. As Seema Kazi observes, "This conception of Kashmiri women as victims rather than survivors does not correspond with women's subjective experience and removes them from the *political* canvas of militarization" (138). Here, therefore, I will consider how the mothers of the APDP are not simply icons of grief but are also agents of practices that organize public understanding around this form of violence.

In the following pages, I scrutinize some of the visual and performative strategies through which the APDP protesters seek to cognitively "reappear"

the disappeared, as well as call attention to the gendered vulnerabilities created by the phenomenon of enforced disappearances. Equally, I am interested in some creative visual practices that have fanned out around the APDP's protests, including some examples of graphic, cinematic, and photographic work through which the visual rhetoric and affective power of the APDP's protests have been greatly magnified. In addition to considering the visual rhetoric of the APDP protests, I also look at the graphic art of the Kashmiri cartoonist Malik Sajad and the photography of Altaf Qadri, as well as some examples of public art representing disappearance and its gendered effects in Kashmir. Arguably, it is through a composite of these visual practices that public perception around disappearances and its explicitly gendered significance is being shaped within and outside Kashmir. For while I saw "with my own eyes" one of the monthly APDP protests in July 2012, I also have come to see these protests through the composite visions provided by the representations I examine here. These visual texts have prompted me to think about the nature of sight and seeing in Kashmir; about the various ways in which power-laden, regulated, and resisted looking relations between Kashmiris and the Indian state structure the scene of disappearance, and about the ways in which mainstream Indians as well as Kashmiris might develop a practice of critical spectatorship that acknowledges that spectacles can structure as well as reorient our gaze, and thereby our reality.

"Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality"; in bell hooks's powerful formulation of "the oppositional gaze," this is what it means to look back (116). In this, hooks theorizes the gaze that emerged in response to slavery's brutal regulation of "black looks," whereby black people were punished for merely looking, even as their own bodies could be subjected relentlessly to the probing white gaze in various "scenes of subjection" (as Saidiya Hartman puts it), such as the auction block or the minstrel show. "Even in the worst circumstances of domination," hooks writes, "the ability to manipulate one's gaze in the face of structures of domination that would contain it, opens up the possibility of agency" (116). If the oppositional gaze can restructure the reality of those who had previously only been looked at, I believe it can also transform the reality of those looking on—us, in mainland India, or in diaspora, or in multiple locations, whether Kashmiri or Indian, all removed from the scene of disappearances, witnessing the exchange of looks between Kashmiris and the state, having our sight carefully controlled and channeled by what the state wishes us to see, ignore, or repress. What if we refused to submit our sight to the state and allowed our vision to be guided instead through the perspective of those living in the midst of violence—while never displacing that perspective or glibly assuming it to be the same as our own?

What might we come to see? At the very least, I hope, we might come to see *how* we see what we see. That is, we might "learn to see the frame that blinds us," and the "forcible dramaturgy" of the state (Butler 2009: 100, 73). This is what separates the act of "just looking" from the practice of critical spectatorship: the latter entails that spectators "actively resist the imposition of dominant ways of knowing and looking" (Taylor xii; hooks 128).

With this in mind, I want to situate the resistant visual corpus of this chapter against the optical regime through which the Indian administration has sought forcefully to imprint an idea of India in the Kashmiri eye, even as it seeks to render the suffering of Kashmiris invisible in the national eye, through the collusion of the Indian media as well as by preventing foreign journalists and analysts to report openly from Kashmir. The visual texts I consider below offer a way of reflecting on the state's attempts—not always successful—to blind the Indian civic body, while at the same time foregrounding the Kashmiri view of things, one that has been occluded in mainstream representations of the Kashmir conflict. These visual texts also run counter to the oppressive history of the camera in Kashmir as documented by the literary historian Ananya Jahanara Kabir. Against the "Kashmir views" proffered by European and Indian photographers, and then by Bollywood cinema, the use of photography by the APDP activists and Kashmiri visual artists represents a view of Kashmir by Kashmiris themselves, one that de-composes the view of Kashmir as "territory of desire" for India and Indians (Kabir 72).[2] They seek to engender an alternative gaze in Kashmir and beyond, shaping the ways in which their varying audiences perceive the gendered landscape produced by the violence of disappearances.

The Optics of Disappearance

July 10, 2012. Once again the members of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) had gathered in Srinagar's Pratap Park, as they had been doing on the tenth day of every month for more than two decades. I had previously seen scores of photographs of these iconic protests in newspapers, online blogs, networks, and various friends' Facebook pages. This time, I was there myself. The group was there to protest enforced state disappearances of young Muslim men in Kashmir, notoriously one of the most militarized zones on earth, with over a half million Indian troops in the region. The APDP's members, all relatives of disappeared persons themselves, sat in a broad semicircle, women to one side, men to the other. As I walked the periphery of the circle taking photographs and talking to others present at the event, I heard a kerfuffle a little to the side of the main protest. Parveena Ahangar, the inexhaustible co-founder of the APDP, was being baited by a man who

APDP protesting in Pratap Park. Photograph taken by author, July 2012.

had come there to publicly insist that the protest was pointless. Shut down this shop (*dukaan karyiw band*), he said; nothing would come of it, it was time to end this show (*tamasha*). After a few minutes of argument, Ahangar, losing patience, marched to the center of the semicircle and set up a defiant chant. "*Yeh tamasha nahin hai!*" (This is not a performance!) she began. And quickly came the response: "*Yeh maatam sahi hai!*" (This mourning is real!). The ready chant, while echoing a popular refrain in Kashmiri street protests, indicated to me that it was not the first time the group had found itself needing to counter the allegation that it was all "just drama."

One can easily imagine why the protesters would wish to repudiate the word *tamasha*. Literally meaning "spectacle" or "entertainment," the word *tamasha* across many Indian languages invokes notions of vulgar display. The APDP members understandably wished to distance themselves from this term as they insisted on the genuineness of their grief. Instead, the women presented their protest as *maatam*: in addition to generalized mourning and grief, in Kashmir the word *maatam* also recalls the public self-flagellations of Shi'a mourners at Muharram, where young Muslim men commemorate and mourn the death of the Prophet's grandson, Imam Husain. Within this context, the vocabulary of maatam hence confers a genuineness onto the women's protest that is at once highly performative and legitimate.

I nevertheless want to suggest that we retain one sense of this word to understand the APDP's public protests: that of spectacle. The APDP's monthly sit-ins, I would argue, are powerful public spectacles that foreground an integral relationship between violence and visuality in Kashmir. They do more than simply "draw attention" to the protesters or their cause (although

this itself is a significant achievement on a national media landscape, where enforced disappearances are afforded little coverage). These self-consciously visible and visual protests expose, deconstitute, and recompose the wider visual regime within which young men in Kashmir can seem simply to "disappear." As theater scholar Diana Taylor argues in *Disappearing Acts*, her study of disappearances in Argentina, "Understanding spectacles, with their repeated gestures, might enable us to foresee (and perhaps intervene) in their political dénouement" (1997, 23).

Nobody simply "disappears" into thin air, of course. Neighbors and family members had seen many of the disappeared young men being picked up by the Indian security personnel. When some of these disappeared turned up for burial in mass graves, gravediggers (often coerced to dig graves by security forces) saw these bodies; some even documented these deaths by taking photographs. How did the vision of such witnesses come to be rendered null and void through the state's story of disappearance? In order to answer that question, one must attend to the techniques of ocular control through which the sight of Kashmiris and others is systematically overseen, neutralized, overlooked.

Enforced "disappearance" involves the literal and metaphorical reorganization of perception. It is a process that extends beyond the mere abduction of a person; it is the process by which the seen is rendered unseen. For example, in the 2009 human rights report *Buried Evidence*, published by the Indian People's Tribunal on Kashmir, a Kashmiri gravedigger testifies how the security forces confiscated and destroyed photographs he himself had taken, his purpose being to help relatives identify those buried in unmarked graves:

> Initially I myself was taking photographs of the bodies with an intention to keep a record source for identification of the deceased. I had dozens of photos with me, and a few times families from downtown Srinagar came here and identified the bodies of their slain from those photos. All those photos and other testimonials recovered from the dead were taken away by the army, the police, and other [state] agencies during various raids at my house. (Kashmiri gravedigger, qtd. in Chatterji 52).

And as an activist with the APDP noted to me in conversation, when someone is picked up on charge of being a "militant," neighbors and acquaintances will often destroy any photographs of themselves with that person, lest they be tainted by association and become vulnerable to disappearance. In this way the visual record of the missing person is often "disappeared" along with the person. While the person is rendered invisible, all around Kashmir mass graves have cropped up, the visual displays that serve as a reminder of the army's power to disappear you into an unmarked grave.

And indeed, the spectacular nature of the army and paramilitary presence in Kashmir is one key aspect of the visual order in which disappearances can occur and, further, become significant as a symptom of power. In Kashmir, antidisappearance activists understand full well the role of visual display in the maintenance of state power. The APDP's website notes the visual ubiquity of the military presence across Kashmir: "Armed personnel are deployed not only on the borders but in every street and town square, every village and hamlet. Gigantic army camps surrounded by sandbags and barbed wire sprawl across urban and rural landscapes, forest and mountain giving a *visual reality* to the frequent observation that Kashmir has been transformed into a prison or a city of bunkers" (emphasis added). (And yet to the tourist's eye, these same visual signs inspire relief and confidence that the "militant threat" is under control.) The Kashmiri poet Ather Zia writes about the visual impact of the "fancily named 'concertina' wire" found everywhere in Kashmir:

> toothy, metallic,
> shiny, gloating
> wantonly lying on the roadside,
> one with dust, spit, dried blood, ash,
> in that intimate display with AK-47's
> looking over the heaps of abandoned shoes,
> and puddles of endless dog-mess

The authors of *Buried Evidence* characterize the mass graves in Kashmir (connected by the authors to the phenomenon of disappearances) as "contiguous *displays* of death," underscoring that the intent of mass graves is not only to kill with impunity, but also "to forge an unremitting representation of death" (21, emphasis added). These activists understand that the purpose of disappearances is not simply to get rid of irritants to the state but also to serve as a theatrical display of power to those witnessing this violence.

The APDP's deliberate movement of their grief into the public visual sphere is arguably provoked by a keen awareness that "disappearances" are a product of a wider "scopic regime" by which the Indian state organizes what its citizens must, may, and may not see. Writing in the context of Northern Ireland, anthropologist Allen Feldman uses the term "scopic regime" to name the state's "agendas and techniques of political visualization: the regimens that prescribe modes of seeing and object visibility and that proscribe or render untenable other modes and objects of perception. A scopic regime is an ensemble of practices and discourses that establish the truth claims, typicality, and credibility of visual acts and objects and politically correct modes of seeing" (1997, 7). A similar regime of visual prescription and pro-

scription operates in Kashmir. Kashmiris may, indeed must, see the theatrical spectacle of military power: the armed personnel, the barbed wire, the mass graves, even the rape, torture, and murder that are often forcibly flaunted before Kashmiri eyes. They must see evidence of the power with which India occupies ("administers") Kashmir. On the other hand, both Kashmiris and mainstream Indians must *not* see the tenuousness, the artifice, the provisionality of India's territorial claim to Kashmir. In February 2012 the Indian government compelled *The Economist* to distribute its print copies in India with a white sticker over the map of Kashmir published in that magazine. As opposed to India's official map, which "subsumes without comment or qualification the entirety of pre-1948 Jammu and Kashmir," the *Economist* map had shown the varying territorial claims of India, Pakistan, and China, representing current effective international borders by a dotted line (Kabir 8). India had insisted it would only allow cartographic representations that depicted India's full territorial claims on Kashmir by a solid line rather than a dotted one. As Kabir points out, the official Indian map serves as "the visual equivalent of the oft-repeated claim, 'Kashmir is an integral part of India'" (8). The visual proscription of the *Economist* map represented quite neatly how the state seeks to construct and maintain a national fantasy of India through scopic manipulation. These are the techniques by which the nation-state seeks to visually construe itself as a solid given rather than as a construct open to reconstruction.

Given this environment of intense visual control, for the APDP and its supporters an important task is not only to retain the memory of the disappeared and highlight the devastating effects of disappearances but also to counter the process of visual manipulation and erasure through which that violence is achieved. The "repeated gestures" performed in the APDP's public protests constitute a countervisual repertoire that fundamentally challenges the scopic regime of the state through the creation of public spectacle (Taylor 23). As Taylor argues, there is an intense theatricality to the act of political disappearance, discernable not in the domain of visibility but in the potential of disappearances to dramatically refigure the visual sphere by "mak[ing] the visible invisible, the real unreal" (132). It is worth considering, then, how the protesters of APDP deploy public spectacle to performatively reverse this theatrical "disappearing act" and perceptually "reappear" the disappeared.

The Repertoire of Protest

The APDP was founded in 1994 by Parveena Ahangar (whose nineteen-year-old son Javaid had been taken away by security forces in 1991) and the

human rights lawyer Pervez Imroz. Both came together to place scrutiny on the practice of enforced disappearance, whereby security forces would pick up young men who were branded "militants" and then were never heard from again. The organization has since split into two organizations with the same name, led by Ahangar and Imroz, respectively, each still dedicated to documenting disappearances, filing cases, and broadly holding the state to account for enforced disappearances.[3] Both organizations have also carried forward an investment in public visibility, in the form of public protest they first initiated when they were together—and it is arguably this aspect of their organizing that has placed them at the center of the field of visual cultural production that I trace here. Indeed, one of the key tactics of the APDP since its formation has consisted of moving the private mourning of relatives of the disappeared into the public domain. Early in the organization's life, APDP members met at Ahangar's home in Batmaloo; soon however, the organizers decided to move their meetings into a public park in Srinagar. In addition to gaining greater visibility in their attempt to bring the state's abuses to light, the public protests serve the purpose of constructing a public "postmemory" for a younger generation that many activists fear have no recollection of the dark decade of the 1990s, when both the militancy and the practice of enforced disappearances was at its peak (Hirsch 5). Each organization continues today to organize these public protests on different monthly dates in Srinagar's Pratap Park.

These protests in the middle of Srinagar's bustling Lal Chowk, month after month, with garnered media presence, represent a significant visual appropriation of public space, one that claims and redirects the gaze—of passersby, of tourists, of Kashmiris themselves, and not least, of the state. It is a gesture that not only indicates a wish to be seen or looked at by all these audiences but indeed *to be seen in the act of looking*, that is, to be seen actively surveying the state's scopic regime. It is a gesture that disrupts the tourist postcard vision of Kashmir as paradise. "The tourist can never see what the Kashmiri sees," Akhil Katyal writes in a moving review of Aamir Bashir's 2010 film *Harud*. "The tourists' gaze is circular, he looks at that which others exactly like him also look at, so he only sees Dal Lake or its shikaras, in soft light and sanitized proportions, and he goes back to the hotel room at night" (Katyal, n.p.) The tourist's fleeting gaze does not register the experience of Kashmiris who live in fear of army crackdowns or the grief of relatives searching for their disappeared kin. As discussed in chapter 2, it is partially this restricted gaze, focused on a recycled stockpile of popular images, that has produced Kashmir as a desirable territory in the Indian nationalist imagination. The APDP's public protest, by foregrounding that which the tourist's gaze circumvents, reterritorializes Kashmir, presenting it

as a territory of conflict with effects that go beyond the loss of a yearned-for vacation destination for many mainland Indians. To at least some extent, it makes the landscape intelligible as a landscape of loss for Kashmiris rather than for Indians.

In this, the APDP protests, visually proliferated through photographs, documentary films, artwork, and news reports, are part of a larger effort by Kashmiris to claim a public gaze that has historically tended otherwise to rest either on a de-peopled landscape or on reductive and fetishized representations of Kashmiris in Bollywood cinema (Kabir). Today, photographs and videos of military abuse posted by Kashmiris abound on YouTube and Facebook, two sites that are often preemptively blocked in Kashmir by the state. One such video from 2010, the year of mass public protests across Kashmir, serves as a potent reminder of the ways in which violence, visual spectacle, and visual access are fundamentally gendered and the ways in which gendered modes of looking might enable a particular model of resistance. In September 2010, a YouTube video titled "Indian Security Forces Kashmiri Youth to Walk Naked on Road" began to be widely circulated. It was quickly taken down by YouTube, but not before it had been viewed by thousands of people on Kashmiri networks and on Facebook. According to Shuddhabrata Sengupta, writing on the Indian political blog Kafila, "A concerted online effort across two facebook pages by a constellation of people who did not know each other prior to this incident made sure that the video was momentarily up on Youtube. Notices went out across facebook walls to download the video from the concerned Youtube site so that the video could have a distributed, viral presence across several hundreds, if not thousands of computers. By the morning of Thursday, the 9th of September, the effort to 'erase' the video from public consciousness had failed." Kashmir-based newspapers and websites reported widely on the viral video and responses by both outraged Kashmiris as well as Indians. Pertinent for my inquiry here was the textual injunction prefacing this infamous video of Kashmiri male youth being herded naked by Indian military personnel: "brothers please watch, sisters please do not watch." What presumptions about gender and sexuality underlie this attempt to both invite and censor the witnessing gaze? Why is it presumably permissible or indeed necessary for men to behold the nakedness and humiliation of "brothers," but not for women? Parsing the seemingly obvious answers to this question may perhaps reveal the heteronormative presumptions underpinning the rules of visual access reiterated by this viral video.

The injunction "brothers please watch, sisters please do not watch" invites Kashmiri men to witness the kinds of indignity they themselves might be subject to, calling them to action. The sight of women or "sisters," meanwhile,

is sought to be deflected: because of the presumption that feminine eyes must be shielded from unpleasant things; because of the perceived added injury of having men's sexual vulnerability and humiliation seen by womenfolk; because naked male bodies are not and must not be available to the gaze of women, which must be preserved from corruption. And yet of course the very inclusion of this text within the viral video presumes that "sisters" are already watching, online and off. Online sisters, witnessing the suffering of Kashmiri men, hear the cries of other "sisters" within the video loudly lamenting what they see, only to be derided by the officers who laughingly mimic their cries. The injunction also operates within a framework of naturalized heterosexuality, whereby the gaze of women presumably risks eroticizing the nakedness of these vulnerable male bodies, while also possibly corrupting the female looker. The gaze of men ("brothers"), on the other hand, is deemed secure from the risk of such violations to both the seer and the seen, and it is presumed to hold the ability to galvanize the male holder of the gaze, either to resistance or to self-protection, but never to desire.

More recently, in January 2013, a YouTube user named "seeker7676" uploaded a video titled "Kashmir: Indian militiamen assault detained Kashmiri teenagers," featuring two young Muslim men being beaten mercilessly by Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP).[4] In the course of the beating, carried out by several uniformed and smiling JKP officers who obligingly step aside for the male videographer when asked, both men are stripped of their clothes, with one in particular having his jeans yanked off. In an accompanying note, seeker7676 marks the video as "the latest of a series of video evidences . . . which shows how Indian occupational forces commit war crimes in Kashmir," also noting the significance of the stripping: "Some of the detained Muslim Kashmiri boys have been sodomised inside the detention and many have been tortured."[5] These video testimonies rely on the "proof value" carried by film to provide testimony of the often-sexualized violence against Kashmiri men. They rely on the spectacle of such sexualized violence to galvanize Kashmiri consciousness around the excesses of the Indian state. The mothers of the APDP, on the other hand, provide a different kind of evidence, evidence not forensically verifiable through photorealist claims. Instead, they offer maternal grief and anger as evidence of disappearances, tapping into a deeply naturalized regard for maternal love. The presence of these women in the park with photographs of their sons comes to serve as evidence of disappearances.

The APDP protests comprise much more than the mere presence of bodies in the park. There is in fact in these protests an entire visual repertoire that performs the work of remembrance in very specific ways. For example, the APDP members typically seat themselves against a large photographic collage of the disappeared; they hold against their bodies photographs of their

disappeared sons; they wear badges and headbands bearing the trademark silhouette icon used by APDP and in antidisappearance activism globally. And, of course, the moving image that people most often remember from these protests is the weeping of mothers, sometimes quiet, occasionally loud, always a reminder of loss.

The protest strategies, artwork, and banners I examine here are largely those utilized by Ahangar's group, although I occasionally refer also to those organized by Imroz's organization. While Ahangar herself was closely involved in the planning of the monthly meetings and served as a primary figure in the protests, raising slogans and welcoming supporters, there were many volunteers who created the banners, posters, and badges utilized by APDP protesters, not any one artist. Many of the visual elements of protest mentioned above are drawn from a repertoire of global activism against state disappearances. The "wall" of photographs; the use of the silhouette; and the public expression of maternal grief are forms of protest first made iconic by the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo of Argentina and reproduced across Latin America as well as in activism against state disappearances in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Indeed, organizers with both APDP groups acknowledged the Argentine Madres and other organizations of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAID) as inspirations for their aesthetic strategies. The APDP's use of this repertoire thus joins them to a transnational community of activists both politically and performatively. Despite these similarities, we might also consider how these familiar visual elements of protest have a specific significance in Kashmir, where they fit into a very particular epistemology for an audience who may or may not be familiar with the transnational solidarities expressed by the protests. What do these elements make visible about disappearances *in Kashmir*?

One of the central aspects of the protest relates to the use of photographs and photography by the protesters. APDP protesters make extensive use of photographs of the disappeared, and, of course, the protest is itself meant to be photographed, as protesters make use of the local media to magnify their reach. Like the mothers of the Argentine movement against disappearance, APDP members use photographs as "a kind of proof" in the face of the state's denials (Taylor 2002, 159). "These people *were* here," the photographs held up by the protesters say. Or as one activist put it to me: "People are becoming faceless, but we are giving a face to this disappearance. . . . The state is making them faceless by disappearing them, but we have a face with us of that person. So we want the face to be visible, and that is possible only in a photo ID."[6] The composition below by Altaf Qadri, from the online photo series "Mughli: The Lonely Mother," metaphotographically foregrounds the role of the photograph in the movement's repertoire.

Remembering the disappeared. Photograph by Altaf Qadri.

Qadri's photograph compositionally replicates the archival collage or "wall" of photographs of the disappeared utilized in the APDP protests, displayed in the APDP office in Hyderpora and on their website. The topmost row of photos in Qadri's photograph features the disappeared themselves (the cutting off of this row suggests that the wall extends upward, possibly infinitely); but in the main, it is the parents and relatives of the disappeared who appear on the photographer's wall. They appear here in their classic "protest pose," bearing photographs of the disappeared in their hands. Placing photographs of the disappeared themselves alongside those of their relatives, Qadri's composition registers these relatives as now part of the casualties of disappearance. The arm that cuts across the photograph points our gaze to the well-loved Mughli (a figure whom I return to later in this chapter), the first APDP activist to die without ever seeing her son again and the subject of numerous visual texts by Kashmiri artists close to the movement. This same arm leads us back to a very young Parveena Ahangar, on the bottom left. Now considerably older, Ahangar is today a familiar face in the Kashmiri and also the international media, where she is frequently photographed in an aspect of mourning. It is impossible to view Qadri's photograph, dated "2012," and not be struck by the image of Ahangar's youth, which functions in this photograph to quietly document the sheer length of time spent by relatives looking for their missing. We see this hand in the act of adding yet another such photograph to the wall; this, along with the empty space at the bottom right, serves as a chilling reminder of the ongoing nature of disappearances:

the children have disappeared, and the generation of parents who keep their memory alive are now disappearing too.

One of the most photographed "poses" of the protest, reproduced widely across local and global media, is of course the iconic pose of the mother sitting with a photograph of a disappeared son.[7] This gesture, of wearing the photograph of the disappeared on or against the body of the parent, visually restores the familial bonds disrupted by the state; it also lends the body of the parent/relative to mark the place of the disappeared. Another by Qadri, below, neatly brings out the logic of substitution at work in the pose. The photograph, taken from a low angle, "disappears" the mother's upper body to the same extent that her son's body appears in the photograph she holds. Her upper body "disappears" and reappears as a silhouette, recalling another visual tool familiar from APDP protests, where parents "wear" silhouettes representing the disappeared on their headbands or on badges. Here, rather than wearing the silhouette against her body—a gesture that ordinarily highlights the maternal bond between the protester and the missing son—the mother has herself become the silhouette. The protesting mother has "disappeared" behind the son's image, lending her own body to mark the place where he had been. If the darkening-out of the woman's face to focus our gaze on the disappeared male child risks a disconcerting erasure of the individual mother in question, the sight of her foregrounded overlarge hands holding the photograph of her son reminds us that she, like all the APDP women who position themselves behind photographs of their sons at protests, shares authorship of this image.

Mughli in "protest pose" with her son's photograph. Photograph by Altaf Qadri.

Qadri's photograph recalls and references the use of silhouettes in APDP iconography. The recognizable silhouette of a male figure in a collared shirt appears on headbands worn by APDP members and is used on APDP banners and badges. Writing in the context of the Argentine Madres' movement, Ana Longoni notes that whereas the use of photographs marks the unique individuality of each of the disappeared, the silhouette serves the function of *quantification*, standing for each of the innumerable disappeared, many of whom left no photographic trace, in Argentina as in Kashmir. As Longoni notes, the use of silhouettes in antidisappearance activism "[represents] 'the presence of an absence'"; silhouettes represent "not simply what is absent—for all representation is, by definition, a representation of an absent object—but rather, what is intentionally made absent" (9). The iconic silhouette, lacking indexicality, of course cannot represent the disappeared themselves; what it represents is their *mass* disappearance.

Recently, students of Kashmir's Fine Arts College produced a striking, large-scale silhouette and installed it in Pratap Park on the International Day of Disappeared Persons in Srinagar.[8] The oversized silhouette traces the gap left by the disappeared in the communal fabric of Kashmiri society. The silhouette, cut from a framing canvas of newsprint, perhaps gestures to the national and international media's implication in enabling such disappearances through silence; but it may also serve as a reminder of how a supportive local media within Kashmir *has* succeeded in drawing attention to the gaping absence in Kashmiri society. The photographic framing of this artwork by the photographer Fayaz Kabli for Reuters is possibly as striking as the installation itself.[9] The explicit inclusion of three young male bodies in the frame is a telling choice: to look at these mobile male bodies, clambering perilously close to this static cutout of the disappeared, is to be reminded once more of the vulnerability of young men in Kashmir as well as the ongoing nature of this violence. There is no telling which of them might disappear into the gap next.

Quite another kind of gendered vulnerability is figured in the weeping of mothers, who often break down at the protest, where they are photographed by sympathetic (male) photographers. What is achieved by this act of public mourning? Mothers' grief for sons, deeply naturalized as the grief to surpass all grief, inconveniently displayed in the public domain, makes it impossible for onlookers to claim innocence about their suffering. If the above male-figured silhouette and Kabli's photograph point to the embodied vulnerability of young men to disappearance, the proliferating photographs of weeping and suffering mothers [and often half-widows] underscores the social vulnerability of the women left behind. Indeed, the paradigmatic photographic image of the APDP protests is that of the weeping mother. A Google image

search for "APDP Kashmir," for example, pulls up scores of images of bereaved mothers (and sometimes half-widows) that saturate the local press and online news networks. This visual image fits into a wider narrative of maternal suffering and is replicated across the literature, poetry, and music of protest in Kashmir. In order for an audience to consciously register the violence of disappearances, the helplessness of female survivors must be emphasized, their suffering foregrounded. Another graphic by Malik Sajad (not reproduced here) captures this dynamic perfectly: a man wearing headphones marked "UN" holds a microphone up to a half-widow as she weeps copious tears. "Can you cry a little louder," he says, "I want to check the sound quality!" The need for international intervention necessitates the performance of grief as "evidence" of the devastation wrought by disappearances. Since there is no body (literally) that can testify to the violence of enforced disappearance, that violence must be made visible and authenticated through the spectacle of grief, publicly enacted by mothers and half-widows. The disappeared can only become "visible" through the suffering women they have left behind.

Certainly the display of maternal suffering achieves many of the APDP's own aims: in addition to keeping the memory of the disappeared alive, it powerfully interpellates a younger generation that has not directly witnessed the decade of disappearances (the 1990s). The protests also provide a communal space for shared experience of grief; even the onlooking Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) rarely bother the protesters during the protest. And yet, the elevation of the spectacle of maternal suffering in the visual narrative has its costs. For one, despite a concomitant narrative about the resilience of Kashmiri mothers in the movement, the dominant media image of Kashmiri women still appears to be one of victimhood, as one may glean from the proliferating images of mourning Kashmiri women that routinely accompany news stories about tragic killings of young men by the state. The APDP's presentation of maternal suffering, even when set forth as an act of political agency, risks shoring up such a narrative. Second, as I began to realize only after I returned and set about reviewing the video I had taken at the protest, the photographic framing of maternal suffering also obscures something: the presence of a substantial number of *men* who also appear at these protests. In fact, about 40 percent of relatives who appear at these protests are men. Unlike Argentina, where fathers of the disappeared are said to have "turned inward, often isolating themselves from any collective projects," in Kashmir the presence of fathers, brothers, and other male relatives of the disappeared at the protests has been palpable (qtd. in Taylor, 193). Perhaps for good reason, given the women-led character of the movement, the men at these protests are cast in a "supporting role"; it is the spectacle of maternal suffering and grief that carries the most affective charge here. This was reflected by the

very visual organization of the protest: spread on the ground as a key point of visual interest was a large canvas painted by the well-known Kashmiri graphic artist Malik Sajad, and it was the women who were seated around the periphery of this canvas while the assembled men sat at some distance from it. Sajad's packed canvas, a vertical rectangle on which the faces of twenty-odd men jostle for space, faced not the protesters themselves but away from them. Now a regular exhibit in the APDP's monthly protests, it was laid out for those witnessing and photographing the protest: the press, onlookers, and researchers like myself followed it like a pointer, looking at the artwork, then looking at the women seated behind it. The arrangement was a reminder of the "photographic-ness" of these monthly protests and also a clear marker of the gendered organization of this monthly public spectacle.

While the grief of women is foregrounded, the grieving of fathers and brothers correspondingly finds relatively little space in visual representations. This may be explained in part by the fact that women's mourning is more amenable to visual representation: mothers and wives can cry while fathers and brothers must swallow the pain, or else turn to anger. (In fact, as I heard later, Ahangar's heckler at the start of the protest was himself the brother of a disappeared person; once a supporter of the APDP, he had turned away from the organization as his brother's case languished for years in the courts and then, APDP members felt, misdirected his anger at them rather than at the state.) And yet fathers *are* present at these protests; they are just cut out of the media's photographic frame. Is there space for their grieving in the visual narrative emerging around the antidisappearance protests? What would it mean to place these grieving fathers and brothers before sight?

I realized only in retrospect that what I saw in Srinagar in July 2012, what I looked for and "zoomed in" on as I stood there alongside so many others with my camera, had been given to me to see by the visual representations I had already seen before.[10] At the protest, finally, I saw for myself the subjects of these images: I saw the women gathered in a semicircle, sitting with their photographs just as I had seen them in the photographs that I had been viewing from a distance. It is only now that I see what the photographic framing of these protests frequently excludes and overlooks in order to magnify and make iconic: The vastness of the bunkered cityscape wherein these parents occupied but a small part of a public park. What these protests looked like in motion and with sound, the women finally unfrozen from the photographs that had previously held them, some weeping, yes, but also smiling, talking, welcoming supporters. The gathered crowd. And notably, the presence of a substantial number of male relatives of the disappeared, who seemed to be attracting little to no attention from the reporters and photographers pushing their lenses into the women's faces.

But I was still looking through the camera's gaze: only after I left the protest that day did I realize I had forgotten to look at the men. I had to return to the brief video I had taken of the larger protest in order to look at these male relatives of the disappeared. Why had I not looked? Had I felt my gaze would be inappropriate? Did my own gender bar my visual access to them in this loosely gender-segregated space? Would it have been appropriate to look at the men, to photograph them while everyone else, not least the male cameramen, focused on the women? Would it have denied the female-led character of the group to have focused on these male supporters? To look at the men at these protests, I realized, I would have to unlearn the ways of seeing the protest that had been constructed through the protest itself as well as the photographic representations that rendered mothers' grief spectacular.

The Gendered Landscape of Disappearance

> The context of killings in Kashmir has engendered a landscape where the death of men has rendered vulnerable the living, especially women, children, and other gender identified groups
>
> —Angana P. Chatterji, *Buried Evidence*

This evocative graphic illustration by Malik Sajad appeared in *Al Jazeera*'s in-depth feature on Kashmir in April 2011, accompanying an article titled "The Disappeared of Kashmir," a report on "the boys who never came home." Sajad's rich illustration captures with astonishing visual economy the gendered landscape of grief created by the disappearances of the last two decades. An open hand stands against Kashmir's ubiquitous barbed wire, a deadly constant that cuts across the landscape of time represented in the frame, significantly close to the wrist. Positioned not in the center of the image but a little to

Mass graves in Kashmir. Illustration by Malik Sajad.

the left, the hand is turned slightly away from the viewer, its tilt representing the passage of time. It is missing three fingers, the tips of which appear spectrally in the image; they once existed, still to be seen for those who care to look. Embedded at the base of these ghostly fingers are three signs. The one closest to the foreground reads "Mass Graves," a reference to the unmarked mass graves uncovered by human rights activists in 2011. While this sign is in English (the language of internationally oriented human rights activism and report writing in Kashmir), the signs further in the perspectival distance appear to be marked in illegible Urdu script—presumably the names of the disappeared, their illegibility also suggesting the challenges of remembering who exactly these disappeared persons were from the perspective of the present. A buttoned shirt hangs precipitously off the farthest sign; as the last material vestige of the disappeared, the shirt calls attention both to the absence of the shirt's wearer and to the male gender of the disappeared. The entire hand appears shrouded in the flowing burial cloth (*kafan*). Like the empty shirt that hangs over the edge, the past itself seems in danger of disappearing off the edge of time.

Sajad makes masterful use of the graphic form's ability to represent time as space on the page. As Hillary Chute notes, "The way that time is shaped spatially on a page of comics—through panel size, panel shape, panel placement, and the concomitant *pace* and *rhythm* the page gestures at establishing—is essential to understanding how comics works" (7). Sajad's single panel presents time past from the perspective of time present, while gesturing toward an ambivalent future that is visually located, oddly, between the present and past in this panel. In disrupting the linearity of time in this way, the image captures the grim temporal stagnation that characterizes the lives of the relatives of the disappeared, giving visual form to the frequent observation made in Kashmir that time stands still for those who grieve. And yet, in the figures of the women, in the midst of this temporal stasis, we see movement. It is the women of Kashmir, appearing as the surviving two fingers of the larger communal hand, who represent both the devastation of disappearances and the hope of rebuilding community. The woman figured as the index finger appears to move resolutely toward the gravesites beneath the spectral fingers, her eyes fixed on this target. She is holding by the hand—indeed, seems to be pulling up behind her—the woman closest to the foreground and presumably (given the temporality represented by the tilt of the hand) most recently bereaved by the tragedy of disappearances. The two women, hands conjoined, appear to be "progressing" up an incline; yet they progress not into the future space represented by the image's foreground but into its past. In the temporal and topographi-

APDP poster. Photograph taken by the author at APDP's Hyderpora office, July 2012.

cal scheme of the image, time present appears as an impediment to be surmounted, while "progress" is represented as an uphill journey leading back to the brutal past of the occupation. Sajad's illustration suggests that the way "forward" is inevitably through the past, through this history that has trapped women in the limbo state captured by the term "half-widows." Where this journey leads, however—beyond the acknowledgment and commemoration of the missing—seems uncertain. The lines of fate, doubling here as the folds of time, radiate outward from these female figures. As an internal visual counterpoint to the dismembered hand in the image, Sajad's illustration features two other hands: those of the women, whose own joined hands appear to bind together the two surviving "fingers" of the larger hand, symbolizing the possibility of survival and rebuilding through mutual support, even as they mourn.

Sajad, a public supporter of the APDP, is drawing, of course, on the icon widely utilized by the APDP in its posters, banners, and website: the image of a hand with a missing middle finger, bearing on its palm the Urdu word "missing." When I met Ahangar in July 2012, she explained the significance of this APDP logo with the words: "*yeh shareer ka ek ang hai*" (this is a body part). Ahangar's annotation perhaps unwittingly recalls the "atoot ang" (unbreakable body part) metaphor whereby Hindu nationalists frequently proclaim that "Kashmir is an integral limb of India" (*Kashmir Bharat ka atoot ang hai*). Ahangar's utterance privileges another body (politic): not that of the nation-state, but the communal body that has been dismembered in order

to maintain the bodily integrity of the Indian nation-state. While Sajad's graphic draws upon the APDP icon, it also redraws this icon through a different visual idiom, mining the metaphoric potential and visual resonances of the hand image across the Kashmiri, Indian, and international public imagination. Unlike the APDP logo's hand print—which itself draws upon widespread protest iconographies where attending protesters add their hand print as a metonymic sign of solidarity—Sajad's hand, which proceeds down to the wrist, ironically evokes the iconic Congress Party's longstanding hand symbol for national integration. Its scattered fingers appear as the other of the Congress Party's "national integration" symbol (with its gapless fingers), but also of the closed fist long associated with "solidarity" in international movements. The dispersed, spectral fingers in Sajad's panel speak to the dis-integration of the Kashmiri communal body, as well as the difficulty of forging solidarities when integral members of the community are missing. Its scattered fingers also appear as the negative of the closed fist long associated with "solidarity" in international movements.[11]

Although vulnerable and victimized, women are figured here as a remaining resource for community as they support each other in an environment where women now outnumber men across the state. What lies ahead? The path toward a public acknowledgment and memorialization of the devastation of their families and communities ("mass graves"), yes, but what else? Does the movement also envision a regendering of Kashmiri society, a challenging of gender roles? What does "forward" movement mean in this context?

"The Lonely Mother"

I turn now to Altaf Qadri's photo series "Mughli: The Lonely Mother," a sequence of twenty-two photographs that uses the medium of photography not only to transmit knowledge about the phenomenon and tragic effects of disappearances, but also to deconstruct the visual logics within which such violence could occur in the first place. Posted as a slideshow on Qadri's website under a tab titled "Stories," this is a story that can perhaps only be told through photography, a medium that exposes what Benjamin called the "optical unconscious" (Wells 13).

"The Lonely Mother" begins with a textual description of context: the first slide in the series provides an overview of "Enforced Disappearances" as "one of the most harrowing" aspects of the Kashmir conflict, and then goes on to describe its gendered repercussions. "Of the disappeared persons, between 2000–2005 most of them were married males. Although men have

been subject to disappearance largely, women have been adversely affected because of being related to them as daughters mothers, sisters and wives." It goes on to profile the deceased Mughli, one of the earliest members of the APDP, and the first to die without having seen her son again. The slide details her desperate attempts to trace her disappeared son Nazir Ahmad Teli, despairingly noting that his return "seems to be just a dream of hope of a desperate mother who too wants her missing son to return alive." The text ends by noting that Mughli died in the fall of 2009. The series thus carries the aura of elegy, not for the disappeared son, but for the mother who looked for him for nineteen years.

A word about the social life of these photographs may speak to the interpenetration of Qadri's photographs with other visual sites that house the memory of the now deceased Mughal Mase. My own recent encounter with these photographs was through Iffat Fatima's documentary *Where Have You Hidden My New Crescent Moon?* which opens with a selection of photographs from Qadri's series. Subsequently I traced and was able to view the entire series at length and repeatedly on Qadri's website as a slideshow; at this point I realized I had visited Qadri's website previously, probably by clicking through the Facebook page of a friend or a network. As I viewed the images, I sent the link to friends in Mumbai who would be unlikely to stumble across this work in the wilderness of cyberspace. Later, in conversation with Iffat Fatima, I learned that she herself had come across Qadri's photographs in the large archive of documents housed in the APDP office in Hyderpora, where they may be shown to visitors among other visual and textual documents that form part of the institutional memory of the organization. Needless to say, each of the "framing" contexts mentioned herewith—Qadri's website, the Facebook pages of individual Kashmiris, and Kashmir networks online; the APDP documents archive; Fatima's documentary—also makes for a vastly different experience of viewing the photographs in question. This brief trajectory of viewing, sharing, and circulating these images is a reminder that one does not simply "come across" images but that they are rather pushed into view through various fields, visual and nonvisual, that one passes through. One's transit through those fields, too, is never incidental; what one sees within those fields is so irreducibly moored to where one stands that any reading of the visual fields of production from an assumed position of omniscience would be disingenuous at best. I have read these images, as indeed I have read all the texts examined in this book, from my own situated perspective as an Indian citizen but also a Kashmiri from a diasporic Pandit family and as an academic reflecting on the long history of violence associated with the

nation-state whose privileges I inhabit as a middle-class Brahmin woman. And so my analysis here may be read as my own effort to reorganize the way we see these images from the viewing post of "India," or even to add to their visibility in the first place.

At the same time, I would not wish to suggest that the vision imparted to us by Qadri's photographs is entirely determined by subjective location. I would agree here with Judith Butler that "interpretation is not to be conceived restrictively in terms of a subjective act. Rather, interpretation takes place by virtue of the structuring constraints of genre and form on the communicability of affect—and so sometimes takes place against one's will, or, indeed, in spite of oneself" (2009, 67). Thus it is also worth considering how Qadri's compositions themselves attempt to structure the way we see, literally and metaphorically, the violence of disappearances. In Qadri's photographs, this violence becomes apparent both in the tragic, gendered aftermath of this phenomenon (the loneliness of mothers embodied by Mughli, the "subject" in and of the photographs) *and* in the structures of seeing, through which the spectacle of disappearance is managed by the state. Qadri's series is perhaps less about the disappeared themselves and more about the "disappearing act" staged by the state through a manipulation of public sight.[12] Engaging closely with these images, I suggest, may make more critical spectators of us all, and thereby move us to a different vantage point. I wish to proceed, therefore, with a subsequence of three images that compel us to consider the relationship between violence and vision.[13]

In this sequence of images, Mughli is captured in the act of rubbing her eyes; appearing for an eye test; and finally having her eye scrutinized by someone as the photograph of her disappeared son looks directly out at the viewer. All three images draw the viewer's attention to Mughli's apparently failing sight, as if to ask wryly whether this might be the reason Mughli is unable to trace her son—for how can someone simply "vanish into thin air"?[14] It is worth pausing over one particular photograph in this sequence, arguably one of the most arresting images in the series.

Of all the photographs in Qadri's series, it is perhaps this one that is most clearly marked with the Barthesian punctum, that accidental feature captured in the photograph that "rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces [one]" (Barthes 26). Unlike Barthes however, whose examples of punctum are intensely personal, I locate the punctum of this tableau-like photograph in the lines of sight structuring the image. Qadri shows us a scene that, apart from its photographic framing, might be an unremarkable sight: a woman (Mughli) having her eyes tested while another, younger woman waits, her child in her arms. What first arrests our gaze is the dramatic "eye-line" leading from the white sclera of the woman on the right of the frame

Vision in the time of disappearance. Photograph by Altaf Qadri.

to the chart above Mughli. Combined with the pointer in the man's hand (a second leading line in the photograph), this woman's gaze first fixes the viewer's eye on the chart. Two other lines of sight, the child's and the man's, direct our gaze at Mughli. She herself is not looking directly at the chart above her head but presumably at its reflection; with her uncovered eye she looks out at something beyond the frame. Mughli's gaze with its missing referent: here is the photograph's punctum. Once it has risen, this detail is invested with a "power of expansion" that at once invokes what is outside the frame and itself "fills the whole picture" (45). It creates what Barthes calls a "blind field" by invoking something external to the picture (57).[15] We are led to ask what Mughli is looking at, and, of course, we know what the referent is: the reflection of the chart, but also the missing son. Poignantly, while Mughli's gaze is missing its object, the woman on the right holds on to the object of her gaze as tenaciously as she holds on to her child, seemingly a young boy who has not yet reached the age when disappearances become a danger.

What makes this image work in the series is that it functions as such an apt deconstruction of the visual economy within which the violence of disappearance occurs. In these photographs, Qadri deconstructs the fiction of direct visual access. The very next image presents a similar scene—Mughli's eye is being examined by a man, but directly in front of us is a photograph of her missing son—a reminder of the representational nature of the medium itself. As Nazir Ahmed Teli looks out at us we are made freshly aware that

we are looking not at Teli but at a photograph of him; in fact, we are looking at a photograph of a photograph of him, and it is through the photograph that he is rendered present. There is no "plain sight" that is not already manipulated through the technologies of seeing, including the camera. Qadri's photographs compel us to ask, with Allen Feldman, "Where does violence emerge into visibility, and what kinds of visibilities does violence create?" (1997, 31). In Qadri's photographs violence is not directly visible, and yet it creates visibilities, visual worlds shaped by violence, in which grieving mothers become spectacularly visible both as political agents and as vulnerable survivors of the disappeared.

The title of Qadri's online exhibit, "Mughli: The Lonely Mother," and the opening slide both direct our reading of these photographs as they cannot, for example, in the APDP photograph archive (unless also accompanied by a similar title there). I wish to ask whether we can read these images to place some pressure on the title—the given "story" of the photo essay—without negating the loneliness that must certainly attend to this mother's loss. It is not that, seduced by a desire to establish "women's agency," I seek to displace the story of maternal loneliness signaled by Qadri's title. But I see an advantage to sorting out the nature of that loneliness, partly by foregrounding certain images within Qadri's own sequence and partly by tracing the transmission of some of these photographs into another visual site where their meaning comes to be somewhat modified—in this instance, Fatima's documentary film. What produces and exacerbates maternal loneliness and vulnerability in a time of disappearances? How might we understand, frame, and memorialize these vulnerabilities even as we acknowledge the impressive political agency of the women who are thus framed? Whereas Qadri's series compels us to consider the role of the state in producing the vulnerable condition of maternal loneliness through the practice of enforced disappearances, Fatima's documentary also probes the role of existing patriarchy in exacerbating the vulnerability produced by state violence.

The first image in Qadri's series (discussed earlier) provides a thematic overview, so to speak, to the "story" of maternal loneliness in his photo essay. Mughli appears alone in the iconic APDP "pose," seated in the outdoors with a photograph of her son. On Qadri's website and in Fatima's tribute film where this photograph reappears, the appearance of this photograph after Mughli's death poignantly marks the fact that Mughli is no longer around to lend her body to the disappeared son as she had been able to do at the time of Qadri's photographing. In positioning Mughli herself as the subject of the visual artwork, this photograph in both Qadri's and Fatima's visual texts establishes an equivalence rather than a substitution between

Mughli and her disappeared son: Mughli too has now disappeared, and her disappearance is (made) as significant as that of her son. Whereas Qadri's first image accentuates Mughli's loneliness by capturing her in isolation (although even here we see the arm of another APDP woman on the edge of the image), the next several images in the photo essay locate Mughli within the wider community of the APDP. Yet these public scenes are frequently punctuated by images of Mughli in isolation. In four consecutive images we see Mughli stepping through the door of a darkened house; Mughli drying clothes in her courtyard; Mughli locking up the house as she leaves (for there is no one there); and, finally, Mughli walking alone through Habbakadal in a striking image that both relays and freezes her forward movement, a visual rendering of the everyday experience of time for the relatives of the disappeared. But if these isolated shots relay her loneliness, other images foreground the political community that leavens that loneliness: we also see Mughli walking together with other activists in an APDP protest, and in the company of other women, and of course, we are aware of the photographer's presence even when Mughli appears in isolation. Loneliness is distinguished from being alone, as Mughli's political community appears in several of the pictures. Mughli is not alone, Qadri's photographs suggest, yet she is lonely.

Mughli in Habbakadal. Photograph by Altaf Qadri.

In Iffat Fatima's documentary film *Where Have You Hidden My New Crescent Moon?* this trope of loneliness is carried forward yet substantially transformed. Fatima explores both the role of state disappearances as well as local patriarchal structures in creating the particular gendered and age-based vulnerability Mughli faces in late life. Unlike static representations that frequently freeze Mughli in an aspect of vulnerability, Fatima's film is able to provide a more complex portrait of her vulnerability, partly by capturing Mughli's persona on film. Shot in the space of a single afternoon, the film consists of the filmmaker's visit to meet Mughli along with Parveena Ahangar. It is composed almost entirely of conversations with Mughli, relying heavily on her own charismatic personality and poetic narrative style to convey the texture of her everyday life in the absence of her son. The film pays tribute to the now-deceased Mughli, memorializing her not only for what she represents as an icon for the movement but also as an individual: the woman who, when asked by soldiers if she was keeping a gun in the house, thrust the nozzle of her hookah at them and said, "here's my gun," then asked them to help her move firewood since they claimed to be "on duty." Fatima's film significantly translates the trope of maternal loneliness introduced in Qadri's photo series (which prefaces the film), rebuilding this narrative by also spotlighting the local patriarchal structures that so many sympathetic representations of grieving mothers miss. Married at fourteen and then deserted while pregnant by her husband after only three months of marriage (during which her son was conceived), Mughli raised her son with the support of her parents. Now, Mughli laughingly tells Fatima, her husband wants her back in his dotage, but she has refused. "I have been hurt deeply," she says, prioritizing her personal feelings over the potential practical advantages of her husband's companionship.

If Qadri's photo essay is careful to present Mughli as lonely but not alone, Fatima's documentary emphasizes Mughli's autonomy and presents her as she presents herself: not (or not just) as a "lonely mother," but as a *single* mother. In other words, Mughli is made visible as an autonomous rather than merely lonely subject, an older woman who insists on retaining her independence rather than reuniting in old age with the husband who had once left her for another woman and now wants her back. Mughli's story emerges not only as one of vulnerability but of chosen self-sufficiency and endurance in the face of vulnerability. Acknowledging the autonomy of this determined woman need not, indeed should not, minimize our acknowledgment of her pain or even her loneliness. But it might perhaps aerate the narrative of state-inflicted maternal vulnerability with a sense of other gendered, and aged, vulnerabilities that intersect with it.

Conclusion

Largely, in the iconic visual narratives surrounding disappearances in Kashmir, men disappear, and women grieve. Do women disappear? Do men grieve? As I observed of the press photographers at the APDP protest, the visual narrative of the protesters and of the press frequently declines recognition to either the grief of men or the embodied violence against women. Indeed, in much of the visual production examined in this chapter, male vulnerability is embodied, whereas female vulnerability is figured as indirect, consequent upon the loss of male family members and their protection. Across visual and nonvisual representations of disappearance, the bodies of young Muslim men have lately come to inhabit the image of which bodies are most vulnerable in Kashmir, so much so that activists report that it is men who are much *more* vulnerable to sexual violence than women in Kashmir.[16] On the one hand this emphasis on male sexual vulnerability must be commended for its willingness to denaturalize the myths of masculinity whereby men are only ever agents and never victims of violence. On the other hand, the claims of exceptional and extreme embodied suffering of men in the visual narrative might risk deflecting from militarized violence against women. After all, as is well known, women have also been raped and tortured in large numbers. Moreover, as the human rights activist and anthropologist Angana Chatterji explained to me when I asked if she had heard of women being "disappeared": "Regarding disappearances in Kashmir, it is [largely] men that are disappeared, even as gendered and sexualized violences are perpetrated on women. However, in the event of rape and murder, as in Shopian in 2009, women are 'disappeared' in the process."[17]

Chatterji points to the real and metaphorical ways in which "disappearance" might operate vis á vis women in Kashmir—women are raped, tortured, murdered, killed in crossfire, disappeared into homes as a result of the sexually predatory nature of the state and of local patriarchy. There exists, in fact, a growing movement against the sustained use of rape, of women as well as men, by the Indian military. Very recently, for instance, more than fifty Kashmiri women lawyers, teachers, and students filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) demanding a reinvestigation into the mass rape of an entire village of Kashmiri women in Kunan Poshpora in 1991. But sexual violence does not easily lend itself to effective visual strategies of representation, and perhaps understandably so. The dangers of visualizing rape have been apparent in the range of posters utilized in the Delhi rape protests, which frequently represent women cowering, weeping, and bleeding. While these seek to create empathy for victims of rape and call out for redress on their behalf, they undoubtedly

also consolidate the images of female vulnerability that underpin the "rape script."[18] Thus I am certainly not calling here for a visual campaign around the rampant prevalence of sexual violence by military personnel in Kashmir, to parallel the visual strategies of the antidisappearance movement. Nor, in drawing attention to these other vulnerabilities, do I wish to suggest that young Muslim men are *not* vulnerable in a very specific way to the state's violence—precisely because they are young, Muslim, and male, and fit the image of the antinational, physically fit, arms-trained/trainable "terrorist" that the state sees in all young Muslim men in Kashmir. Rather, I mean to raise the question of what kinds of gendered violence are amenable to visual representation and what kinds may not be represented quite as pervasively in the visual domain. That question also reminds us of the kinds of activism that lend themselves to visual representation and thereby command some space in the optical unconscious in the public sphere, and those that do not. As we acknowledge the value of lending representation to the disappeared by keeping them spectacularly alive in public memory, we might also keep in mind the limits of visual spectacle as a means of representing violence, bearing in mind forms of gendered and religionized violence that may not lend themselves to such representation but nevertheless must be kept in the public eye in other ways.